

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-133. (Canceled)

134. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

transmitting a plurality of video programs to a plurality of consumer devices at respective consumer locations, wherein each said consumer device comprises a mechanism configured to recognize classification information contained in received headers, a mechanism configured to automatically select for storage video programs from the plurality of video programs having a defined level of match between classification information associated with the video programs and preference information associated with the consumer device, and an overwriting mechanism configured to automatically overwrite stored digital data content with automatically selected video programs according to one or more defined criteria; and

transmitting classification information in a header associated with at least one of the plurality of video programs transmitted wherein said classification information comprises descriptive information other than specific identification of the at least one of the plurality of video programs.

135. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134 further comprising:

billing a consumer once a video program has been selected for viewing that has been previously automatically selected for storage based upon preference information.

136. (Canceled)

137. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134, wherein a defined criterion is that oldest stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

138. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134, wherein a defined criterion is that older releases of stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

139. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134, wherein a defined criterion is that stored digital data content which least fits a preference associated with the consumer device is overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

140. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134 wherein the automatically selected video programs are recorded on a removable and portable storage medium.

141. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134, further comprising:
encoding the transmitted video programs with data permitting playback only on a playback device with a compatible decoder.

142. (Previously presented) The method of claim 141 further comprising:
encoding the transmitted video programs with time-based code keys A.

143. (Previously presented) The method of claim 142 wherein the time-based code keys A encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to the plurality of consumer devices and time-based code keys C that are provided to consumer devices that are in good standing, wherein the playback device can only playback a video program if all three codes keys A, B and C have been received.

144. (Previously presented) The method of claim 143 further comprising:
receiving by a central controller system video program playback information from a consumer device when the time-based code keys C are provided.

145. (Previously presented) The method of claim 134 wherein transmitting a plurality of video programs is carried out by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels in compressed-time format.

146. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 134.

147. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, further having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for billing a consumer once a video program has

been selected for viewing that has been previously automatically selected for storage based upon preference information.

148. (Canceled)

149. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, wherein a defined criterion is that oldest stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

150. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, wherein a-defined criterion is that older releases of stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

151. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, wherein a-defined criterion is that stored digital data content which least fits a preference associated with the consumer device is overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

152. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, wherein automatically selected video programs are recorded on a removable and portable storage medium.

153. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, further having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for encoding the transmitted video programs with data permitting playback only on a playback device with a compatible decoder.

154. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 153, further having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for encoding the transmitted video programs with time-based code keys A.

155. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 154, wherein the time-based code keys A encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to the plurality of consumer devices and time-based

code keys C that are provided to consumer devices that are in good standing, wherein a consumer can only view a video program if all three codes keys A, B and C have been received.

156. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 155, further having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for receiving video program playback information from a consumer device by a central controller system when the time-based code keys C are provided.

157. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as in claim 146, wherein transmitting a plurality of video programs is carried out by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels in compressed-time format.

158. (Previously presented) A device comprising:

a receiving mechanism configured to receive a plurality of transmitted video programs wherein there is classification information in a header associated with at least one of the plurality of video programs transmitted wherein said classification information comprises descriptive information other than specific identification of the at least one of the plurality of video programs;

a comparing mechanism configured to compare the classification information to preference information associated with the device;

a selection mechanism configured to automatically select for storage video programs from the plurality of transmitted video programs having a defined level of match between the classification information and the preference information;

a recording apparatus configured to record the automatically selected video programs based on the preference information; and

an automatic overwriting mechanism configured to automatically overwrite stored video programs with automatically selected video programs according to one or more defined criteria.

159. (Previously presented) The device of claim 158 wherein the recording apparatus-is configured to record the automatically selected video programs on a removable and portable storage medium.

160. (Previously presented) The device of claim 158 further comprising:

a playback mechanism configured to playback a video program upon selection for playback by a user wherein said video program has been previously automatically selected for storage; and

a billing mechanism in communication with the playback mechanism configured to transmit billing information to a central billing system accounting for each time the automatically selected video program has been selected for playback.

161. (Previously presented) The device of claim 158 further comprising:

a control mechanism in communication with the receiving mechanism configured to verify a received combination of time-based code keys for authorizing playback of said transmitted video programs, and to enable said playback.

162. (Previously presented) The device of claim 161 further comprising:

a decoding mechanism in communication with the control mechanism configured to decode transmitted video programs wherein time-based code keys A that are encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to a plurality of consumer devices and time-based code keys C that are provided to consumer devices that are in good standing such that a consumer can only view a video program if all three codes keys A, B and C have been received by the playback device.

163. (Previously presented) The device of claim 162 wherein the billing mechanism comprises:

a mechanism configured to communicate an identity of said previously selected video program and a unique identifying address associated with said consumer to said central billing system in response to initiating playback of the previously selected video program; and

a playback-enabling mechanism configured to receive from said central billing system the time-based code key C for identifying a status of said consumer to enable said playback of said previously selected video program.

164. (Previously presented) The device of claim 158, further comprising a mechanism configured to automatically overwrite stored digital data content with automatically selected video programs according to one or more defined criteria.

165. (Previously presented) The device of claim 164, wherein a defined criterion is that oldest stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

166. (Previously presented) The device of claim 164, wherein a defined criterion is that older releases of stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

167. (Previously presented) The device of claim 164, wherein a defined criterion is that stored digital data content which least fits a preference associated with the consumer device is overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

168. (Previously presented) A method comprising:
receiving a plurality of video programs at a consumer device;
receiving classification information in a header associated with at least one of the plurality of video programs received;
comparing the classification information to preference information associated with the consumer device;
automatically selecting for storage video programs from the plurality of video programs having a defined level of match between the classification information and the preference information; and
automatically overwriting stored digital data content with automatically selected video programs according to one or more defined criteria.

169. (Previously presented) The method of claim 168 further comprising:
receiving a bill once a video program has been selected for viewing that has been previously automatically selected for storage based upon preference information.

170. (Canceled)

171. (Previously presented) The method of claim 168, wherein a defined criterion is that oldest stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

172. (Previously presented) The method of claim 168, wherein a defined criterion is that older releases of stored video programs are overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

173. (Previously presented) The method of claim 168, wherein a defined criterion is that stored digital data content which least fits a preference associated with the consumer device is overwritten with automatically selected video programs.

174. (Previously presented) The method of claim 168 wherein the automatically selected video program is recorded on a removable and portable storage medium.

175. (Previously presented) A system comprising:

- a mechanism configured to receive a plurality of transmitted video programs at a consumer device;

- a mechanism configured to receive classification information transmitted in a header associated with at least one of the plurality of video programs transmitted wherein said classification information comprises descriptive information other than specific identification of the at least one of the plurality of video programs;

- a mechanism configured to compare the classification information to preference information associated with the consumer device;

- a mechanism configured to automatically select for storage video programs from the plurality of video programs having a defined level of match between classification information and preference information;

- a recording apparatus operably coupled to the consumer device configured to store the automatically selected video programs; and

- a mechanism configured to automatically overwrite stored digital data content with automatically selected video programs according to one or more defined criteria.

176. (Previously presented) The system of claim 175 further comprising:

- a billing mechanism configured to provide information that enables a provider to bill a consumer associated with the consumer device once a video program has been selected for viewing that has been previously automatically selected for storage based upon preference information.

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177. (Canceled)